

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
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6. (canceled)
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14. (canceled)
15. (canceled)
16. (canceled)
17. (canceled)
18. (canceled)
19. (canceled)

Art B1 20. (currently amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, front and back waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the front and back waist edges, a front waist region contiguous with the front waist edge, a back waist region contiguous with the back waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising a bodyside liner, an outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;

first and second front side panels bonded to the composite structure in the front waist region;

first and second back side panels bonded to the composite structure in the back waist region;

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent article in a pant-like configuration, the fastening system comprising first and second fastening components connected to the respective first and second back side panels and adapted to releasably engage first and second mating fastening components connected to the respective first and second front side panels; and

elastomeric components transversely disposed between the fastening components and the absorbent assembly;

wherein a transverse distance between the first and second fastening components is substantially equal to a transverse distance between the first and second mating fastening components,

The absorbent article of claim 14, wherein the pant-like configuration defines a waist opening and leg openings and engagement of the fastening components and mating fastening components defines refastenable seams, the refastenable seams covering about 90 to about 98 percent of a distance between the waist opening and the leg openings.

21. (canceled)

22. (previously amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, first and second waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the first and second waist edges, a first waist region contiguous with the first waist edge, a second waist region contiguous with the second waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the first and second waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising a bodyside liner, an outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;

first and second elastomeric side panels bonded to the composite structure in the first waist region;

first and second elastomeric side panels bonded to the composite structure in the second waist region;

support members bonded to and extending transversely outward from the first and second elastomeric side panels in the first waist region;

support members bonded to and extending transversely outward from the first and second elastomeric side panels in the second waist region; and

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent article in a pant-like configuration, the fastening system comprising first and second mating fastening components disposed on the support members in the first waist region adapted to releasably engage first and second fastening components disposed on the support members in the second waist region;

wherein the elastomeric side panels in the first waist region are longitudinally spaced from the elastomeric side panels in the second waist region, and a width of the elastomeric side panels in the first waist region is the same as a width of the elastomeric side panels in the second waist region.

23. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 22, wherein the first and second fastening components comprise integral portions of the support members.

24. (original) The absorbent article of claim 23, wherein the support members comprise a loop material.

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Reply to Office Action of February 21, 2003

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25. (original) A disposable absorbent article, comprising an absorbent chassis and a fastening system for releasably attaching a front waist region of the absorbent chassis to a back waist region of the absorbent chassis to define a refastenable pant having a waist opening and a pair of leg openings, the refastenable pant comprising:

a pair of elastomeric, nonwoven front side panels extending from the waist opening to each leg opening;

a pair of elastomeric, nonwoven back side panels extending from the waist opening to each leg opening;

a pair of refastenable seams extending from the waist opening to each leg opening, each refastenable seam disposed between an elastomeric front side panel and an elastomeric back side panel; and

a pair of elastomeric leg members which partially encircle each leg opening.

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26. (original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 25, wherein the refastenable pant further comprises:

an elastomeric front waistband disposed in the front waist region and positioned between the pair of elastomeric front side panels; and

an elastomeric back waistband disposed in the back waist region and positioned between the pair of elastomeric back side panels.

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27. (original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 25, wherein each elastomeric leg member extends from adjacent an elastomeric front side panel in the front waist region to adjacent an elastomeric side panel in the back waist region.

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28. (original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 25, wherein the absorbent article has an overall length dimension, the front side panels are longitudinally spaced from the back side panels, and the front and back side panels have an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension.

29. 9 (previously amended) A training pant for use in training a child to use the toilet, comprising:

an absorbent chassis defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, an overall length dimension parallel to the longitudinal axis, front and back waist edges parallel to the transverse axis, opposite side edges extending between the front and back waist edges, a front waist region contiguous with the front waist edge, a back waist region contiguous with the back waist edge, and a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, the absorbent chassis comprising:

a rectangular composite structure having opposite linear side edges parallel to the longitudinal axis and opposite linear end edges parallel to the transverse axis, the composite structure comprising:

- (a) a liquid permeable bodyside liner;
- (b) a liquid impermeable outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, the outer cover comprising a liquid impermeable inner layer and a nonwoven outer layer;
- (c) an outer cover graphic disposed on the outer cover;
- (d) an absorbent assembly comprising hydrophilic fibers disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover; and
- (e) leg elastic members longitudinally aligned along the side edges of the composite structure;

first and second front side panels bonded to the composite structure in the front waist region, each front side panel having a distal edge, an interior portion between the distal edge and the composite structure, a waist end edge parallel to the transverse axis and forming part of the front waist edge, and a leg end edge forming part of the side edge, the front side panels having an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension of the absorbent chassis;

first and second back side panels bonded to the composite structure in the back waist region and longitudinally spaced from the first and second front side panels, each back side panel having a distal edge, an interior portion between the distal edge and the composite structure, a waist end edge parallel to the transverse axis and forming part of the back waist edge, and a leg end edge forming part of the side edge, the back side panels having an average length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension of the absorbent chassis; and

an elastomeric material disposed between nonwoven facing layers in at least the interior portions to render the side panels elastomeric in a direction generally parallel to the transverse axis; and

a fastening system for releasably securing the absorbent chassis in a pant-like configuration having a waist opening and a pair of leg openings, the fastening system comprising first and second fastening components adapted to releasably engage first and second mating fastening components, the first and second fastening components being connected to the respective first and second back side panels adjacent the distal edges, the first and second mating fastening components being connected to the respective first and second front side panels adjacent the distal edges, the fastening components and the mating fastening components each comprising mechanical fasteners having a length-to-width ratio of about 5 or greater, and engagement of the fastening components and mating fastening components defines refastenable seams that cover about 80 to 100 percent of a distance between the waist opening and the leg openings.